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DEF 18-3

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SUBJECT: Soviet Draft UNGA Res on a World Disarmament Conference (WDC)

REF: USUN 2957, 3899 - DEF 18-3

1. SUMMARY. In view of the likelihood that the General Assembly will adopt a WDC resolution by a substantial majority, USUN should sound out other deis on possibility of amending the Soviet draft resolution to make clear that the WDC idea is to remain simply a matter for UNGA "discussion" and that no commitment is being made

DRAFTED BY: ACDA/IR:RLMcCormack
 IO/UNP:SMcIntyre/JAArmitage
 DRAFTING DATE: 10/28/71
 TEL EXT.: 20835
 APPROVED BY: IO - S. DePalma
 CLEARANCES:
 ACDA/IR - Mr. Leonard
 OSD/ISA - Capt. Morris
 SS - Mr. Miller
 EUR/SOV - Mr. Perry (subs)
 PM - Mr. Garthoff
 EA/ACA - Mr. Sullivan (subs)

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regarding need to set a specific date or to begin concrete preparations for a WDC. Our views on the Soviet resolution type of and the/amendments we desire are as follows: END SUMMARY

2. The Soviet proposal for WDC, which Gromyko presented to the GA on September 28, is expected to come up for debate in the Assembly during the first week of November. While the Soviets appear to be more interested in gaining credit for their WDC proposal than in pressing for early convening of such a conference, their resolution would, if adopted in its present form, place the GA on record as favoring a WDC and would provide that agreement on an actual date and on an agenda for a WDC should be reached before the end of 1972.

3. The Soviet proposal seems designed in some measure to take the play on the WDC idea away from the PRC. On July 30 the PRC flatly refused the Soviet proposal for a conference of five nuclear powers and repeated its

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longstanding position in favor of a world summit conference
to discuss the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

4. Although our allies are skeptical about the
value of the WDC, a number of them have indicated that
they would probably vote in favor of the Soviet resolution.
Non-aligned countries have so far indicated little
interest in a WDC but they ~~will~~ ^{would} probably also support
the Soviet resolution.

5. As the Secretary made clear in his October 4 GA
speech (USUN 3116), we are skeptical about the value of
a WDC. However, since the Soviet resolution is likely
to be adopted, ~~by a large majority~~ we have decided as
a practical matter to ~~offer to support it~~ ^{seek to have it}
~~is~~ amended in a way which will avoid any specific
commitment by the GA to a WDC or any implication of
movement toward still more disarmament machinery outside
the UN framework. While showing that we are prepared

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to be cooperative and flexible in dealing with this matter, this approach would minimize any appearance that the US was aligning itself in a tactical ploy against the PRC and ~~they~~ would leave open the maximum range of options for future decision by obscuring the questions of the timing, nature, and venue of a possible WDC.

6. Accordingly USUN should sound out allied, important non-aligned and Sov dels on possibility of amending the Soviet resolution along lines described above. (Specific changes we desire being sent only to USUN, by separate message.) You should say we could go along with a WDC res along lines of our amended version of the Soviet resolution. If asked, you should say we will not co-sponsor. You should indicate that if the Soviet resolution were pressed to a vote in its present form you would very likely be unable to support it. (Our final decision regarding our vote would be made at a

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later stage in light of situation which develops during
debate and consultations on this issue. Whatever our
vote, we will probably wish to make a statement of explana-
tion setting forth our general reservations regarding a
WDC along the lines of the comments in the Secretary's
October 4 GA speech).

END

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